

Burlington Design Advisory Board

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To: City Councilors
From: Sean McKenzie, Chair
Date: April 26, 2011
RE: Design Advisory Board Annual Report

I am pleased to submit this report for the year 2010-2011. The purpose and charge of the Design Advisory Board is to ensure the quality of design of development that occurs within the City. Our major task, therefore, is to review the design elements of development applications. We are an advisory board, as implied by our name. Our comments and recommendations are forwarded to the Development Review Board (DRB) for their consideration in deliberating applications.

Our board's membership has evolved over the past year into a group with professional expertise in architecture, design, construction, building inspection, planning, transportation, and historic restoration. Our members are very dedicated to quality design and historic preservation within the City, education and assistance with technical questions as appropriate, as well as a fair and respectful application process. We also have alternate members appointed to the Board who are available to sit in during absences or vacancies.

Up to this date, we have reviewed 35 agenda items in all wards of the City; projects ranging from owner-occupied residential to investment, institutional, and commercial buildings. Some major projects reviewed in the past 12 months included the Preliminary Plat Review of a 32-unit Planned Unit Development at Appletree Point Lane, construction of a new four story residential building on College Street, a 4000 square foot addition to the Howard Center on Pine Street, renovations to the Moran Electric Generating building and to the Echo Center, Sketch Plan review for a proposed 40,000 square foot addition to Champlain's Hauke Student Center and three new dormitories on South Willard Street. Our review has included examples of emergent energy technology such as the rooftop solarium and green roof at 444 Pine Street and a wind turbine at 210 Shelburne Street.

The Design Advisory Board's charge does include other tasks. Within our board is the Historic Preservation Review Committee, a three member board acting on behalf of Burlington's Certified Local Government. The HPRC acts to actively identify, evaluate and protect local buildings, structures, districts, landscapes and archaeological sites of historic significance. Acting in a partnership between the community, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the National Park Service, the HPRC secures grant funding for scholarship and research, reviews projects subject to Section 106 review, and reviews and makes recommendations for properties under consideration for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places or the Vermont State Register of Historic Places. This year we advised on a request to nominate the Moran building to the National Register of Historic Resources, which will acknowledge its importance role as a public utility and its representative characteristic as a mid-century building, while ultimately making federal resources and tax credits available for its rehabilitation. Additionally, we reviewed important scholarship done under a 2009 CLG for the purpose of understanding the Five Sisters neighborhood, and recommended the completed Historic Sites and Structure Survey be forwarded to the Vermont Advisory Council for Historic Preservation for adoption as a state historic district. We continue to incorporate our collective expertise in the implementation of design related provisions of the adopted Comprehensive Development Ordinance.

For the coming year, the Board hopes to continue in upholding the design standards that keep the City beautiful and contributing to the efforts in implementing the expanded design related zoning regulations.

Thank you for your time and consideration.